

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 042852

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 042852

NODIS

FOL REPEAT CAPE TOWN 176 SENT ACTION SECSTATE FEB 21

QTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 0176

NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, RH, UK

SUBJ: BRITISH-RHODESIAN CONTACTS ABOUT SETTLEMENT

1. HIGHLY RELIABLE SOURCE WITH CLOSE CONTACTS WITH SMITH
REGIME INFORMS ME THAT IN PAST THREE DAYS THERE HAS BEEN
DIRECT EXCHANGE OF COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN BRITISH FOREIGN
SECRETARY CALLAHAN AND SMITH. SOURCE SAID THAT LATE LAST WEEK
SMITH SENT OUT INDIRECT FEELERS THROUGH PRESIDENT BANDA THAT
HE WAS INTERESTED IN TALKING WITH BRITISH. CALLAHAN SENT
MESSAGE AFTER HEARING THESE SIGNALS TO THE EFFECT THAT HE
UNDERSTOOD THAT SMITH NOW WANTED DIRECT TALKS WITH UK, POINTING
OUT SERIOUSNESS OF FAILURE IN NEGOTIATIONS AND STRESSING THE
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PAGE 02 STATE 042852

NEED FOR "A MODIFICATION IN RHODESIAN ATTITUDE IF SETTLEMENT

IS TO BE ACHIEVED" AND "FLEXIBILITY" IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. SMITH HAS RESPONDED WITH A MESSAGE REFERRING TO CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES CREATED BY SOVIET INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA AND DANGER OF KAUNDA THROWING IN HIS LOT WITH THE SOVIETS. SMITH NOTED THAT AN EARLY RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT WOULD EASE THE PRESSURE ON ZAMBIA BY ALLOWING USE OF RHODESIAN RAILROAD. UK INVOLVEMENT, SMITH CONTINUED, WOULD NOW BE HELPFUL. SMITH ACCEPTED THE NEED FOR FLEXIBILITY AND SUGGESTED THAT AS FIRST STEP CALLAHAN SEND SENIOR REPRESENTATIVE. SMITH CONCLUDED MESSAGE BY NOTING THAT INFLAMMATORY PUBLIC STATEMENTS SHOULD BE AVOIDED.

2. SOURCE SAID THAT BRITISH RESPONSE EXPECTED MOMENTARILY AND HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE FAVORABLE. WHILE NOT EUPHORIC, SOURCE FELT THERE WAS GOOD CHANCE NEGOTIATIONS MIGHT SUCCEED AS HE FELT THERE WAS NO DOUBT ABOUT SMITH'S SINCERITY. SOURCE CHARACTERIZED SMITH'S COMMENTS IN RHODESIAN PARLIAMENT FEBRUARY 20 ABOUT STATEMENTS MADE BY CALLAHAN AND ENNALS IN LONDON AS "FOR ATMOSPHERICS." SOURCE INDICATED SA PRIME MINISTER VORSTER WAS INFORMED OF CONTACTS AND HAD BEEN ASKED TO KEEP LID ON ANY PUBLIC STATEMENTS IN SA.

3. DEPT MAY WISH REPEAT FOREGOING TO LONDON AND LUSAKA.
BOWDLER

UNQTE
EAGLEBURGER

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